Modesty BLAISE

LA MACHINE

by PETER O'DONNELL and JIM HOLDAWAY

MODESTY BLAISE
PENT-HOUSE OVERLOOKING HYDE PARK . . .
THE YOUNG LADY SEEMS TO DO HERSELF VERY WELL, FRASER
OUR DOSSIER PUTS HER PERSONAL FORTUNE AT OVER HALF A MILLION STERLING, SIR GERALD
AH . . . AN UNVIRTUOUS WOMAN WITH A PRICE ABOVE RUBIES, H'MM?
SHE ALWAYS BARRED THE VICE AND PROTECTION RACKETS . . . ONE WOULD SEE SOME VIRTUE IN THAT, PERHAPS?
QUITE . . . AND ONE WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF ONE WOULD NOT PICK HOLES IN ONE'S LITTLE QUIPS, FRASER . . .
1

MODESTY BLAISE
YES?
MISS MODESTY BLAISE? MY NAME IS TARRANT— MAY I HAVE A FEW WORDS WITH YOU?
ON WHAT SUBJECT?
WOULD— AH—MURDER BE ALL RIGHT?
YES, CERTAINLY, DO COME UP . . . SIR GERALD
2

MODESTY BLAISE
IT WAS NICE MEETING YOU, CARTER D. SANFORD THE THIRD . . . GOODNIGHT!
NOW, MODESTY, NOT SO FAST . . .
. . . I DON'T GET STOOD UP THAT EASY, HONEY! WHEN WE DUCKED OUT OF THAT PARTY AND YOU ASKED ME ALONG FOR A DRINK . . . I FIGURED . . .
YOU GOT YOUR SUMS WRONG . . . I'M NOT THAT BORED!
I'VE A VISITOR COMING UP IN THE LIFT— YOU CAN TAKE IT DOWN!
NO DICE! JUST GIVE THE JERK A DRINK AND GET RID OF HIM!
3

MODESTY BLAISE
I LIKE A TOUCH OF HARD-TO-GET — IT'S STIMULATING...
YOU'RE VERY OBTUSE... NOW DO LET GO, OR I SHALL BE ANNOYED!
uhh!
AS SIR GERALD AND HIS COLLEAGUE ARRIVE IN THE LIFT...
4
MODESTY BLAISE
IT'S KIND OF YOU TO SEE ME, MISS BLAISE... THIS IS MY COLLEAGUE, JOHN FRASER
HOW DO YOU DO—
MAY I PRESENT MR. CARTER D. SANFORD THE THIRD— A RECENT ACQUAINTANCE?
A PLEASURE, SIR... I KNOW YOU BY NAME OF COURSE, IN FACT I ONCE ATE SOME OF YOUR FAMOUS BREAKFAST CEREAL IN NEW YORK— BUT I FEAR WE ARE INTRUDING?
NO— MR. SANFORD WAS JUST LEAVING!
5
MODESTY BLAISE
I APOLOGISE FOR COMING AT AN EMBARRASSING MOMENT, MISS BLAISE...
GOODNIGHT, MR. SANFORD— DON'T KEEP IN TOUCH!
I'M NOT EMBARRASSED... WILL YOU COME THROUGH?
I MUST CHANGE... BUT GO AHEAD AND TALK, I CAN HEAR YOU WITH THE DOOR OPEN..
6
MODESTY BLAISE
I'M SURPRISED YOU KNEW MY NAME, MISS BLAISE. I STRIVE TO KEEP MY LIGHT HIDDEN UNDER A BUSHEL!
YOU HOLD A DELIBERATELY VAGUE POSITION AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE, SIR GERALD...
...AND I USED TO BE VERY INTERESTED IN PEOPLE LIKE YOU, BEFORE I RETIRED...
NATURALLY— BUT WE WERE NEVER IN ACTIVE OPPOSITION, I THINK?
NO... AS I PLANNED TO SETTLE IN ENGLAND, I DIDN'T WANT TO BE OUT OF FAVOUR WITH YOUR FOREIGN OFFICE!

MODESTY BLAISE
YOU SAID YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME ABOUT MURDER...
AH, YES... BUT THAT COMES LATER, MISS BLAISE!
WHAT COMES EARLIER?
THIS...
MY DOSSIER? YOU WERE BOUND TO HAVE ONE ON ME, OF COURSE — MOST OF THE MAJOR COUNTRIES HAVE. JUST MARK IT 'CLOSED' AND TELL ME WHAT YOU'LL DRINK...
8

MODESTY BLAISE
WE HAVE YOU AS BELIEVED TO BE AGED 26: HEIGHT 5'6": WEIGHT 120 LBS. BLACK HAIR, BROWN EYES, HINT OF EURASIAN FEATURES: SPEAKS SEVERAL LANGUAGES —
HAVE YOU COME HERE TO CHECK MY MEASUREMENTS, MR. FRASER?
EH? NO, I ASSURE YOU...!
DO LET HIM READ YOU HIS INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY, MISS BLAISE. I'D LIKE YOUR PROFESSIONAL OPINION OF IT — AND THERE'S A PART WHICH IS RELEVANT TO OUR VISIT —
9

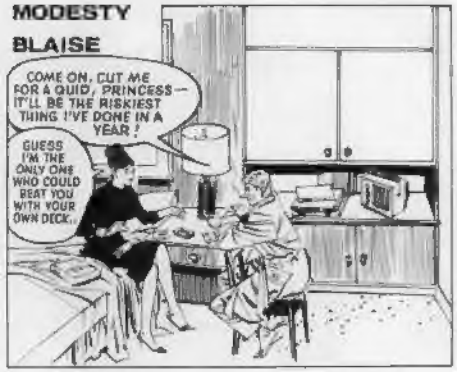
MODESTY BLAISE
MODESTY BLAISE, STATELESS PERSON NOW RUN BRITISH BY MARRIAGE (SEE LATER). FIRST ON RECORD 1953, BELIEVED 17 YRS. OLD, MANAGING SMALL GAMBLING SALOON IN TANGIER FOR LOUCHE SHOOP. ON DEATH OF LOUCHE, M.B. TOOK CONTROL. RAPID EXPANSION OVER FIVE YEARS. GROUP BECAME KNOWN AS THE NETWORK. ACTIVITIES: SMUGGLING, CURRENCY AND GOLD RACKETS, ESPIONAGE-SERVICE, ART AND JEWELLERY THEFTS. M.B. TRAVELLED BOTH AMERICAS, EUROPE, MID AND FAR EAST, CO-ORDINATING NETWORK
..... TRAVELLED BOTH AMERICAS, EUROPE, MID AND FAR EAST, CO-ORDINATING NETWORK ACTIVITIES. BELIEVED FOUR ATTEMPTS MADE ON HER LIFE...
FIVE, I THINK!
FIVE? AH, THANK YOU, MISS BLAISE...
10

MODESTY BLAISE
FRASER CONTINUES READING FROM THE DOSSIER ON MODESTY BLAISE...
... 1960. MARRIED AND DIVORCED DERELICT ENGLISHMAN IN BEIRUT — JAMES TURNER. THUS OBTAINED BRITISH NATIONALITY. TURNER DIED OF ALCOHOLISM, SINGAPORE, 1961
POOR LITTLE MAN... HE LASTED AS LONG AS THAT, THEN?
YES — BUT TO CONCLUDE: 1961, M.B. SPLIT UP HER ORGANISATION, THE NETWORK, CAME TO ENGLAND, AND HAS APPARENTLY RETIRED NOW...
... HER PERSONAL FORTUNE IS ESTIMATED AT HALF A MILLION STERLING!
VERY NICELY READ, FRASER, YOUR DELIVERY IS REALLY ADMIRABLE — DID YOU FIND YOUR DOSSIER ACCURATE, MISS BLAISE?
11

MODESTY BLAISE
Modesty Blaise.
IT'S A VERY GOOD DOSSIER, SIR GERALD— BUT MAINLY SPECULATION, OF COURSE!
OH, QUITE! NO PROOF OF ANY ILLEGALITIES— AND BESIDES, I'M NOT A POLICEMAN, YOU KNOW
SO?
AH. THANK YOU! WELL, MISS BLAISE... TO COME TO THE POINT, I THINK WE CAN USE YOU...
12
NOBODY... NOBODY USES ME, SIR GERALD. I DECIDED THAT IN A REFUGEE CAMP, WHEN I WAS TWELVE!
MODESTY BLAISE
VERY PURELY, I ASSURE YOU...
YOUR MARRIAGE IN BEIRUT TO THE LATE MR. TURNER — THAT WAS PURELY TO OBTAIN BRITISH NATIONALITY?
YE-E-ES... WELL, I'M AFRAID IT WASN'T VALID. WE HAVE A CERTIFICATE OF HIS EARLIER MARRIAGE, YOU SEE!
13
YOU PAID HIM FOR NOTHING, MISS BLAISE... YOU'RE STILL A STATELESS PERSON, AND COULD BE DEPORTED AS UNDESIRABLE!
MODESTY BLAISE
SO YOU'LL DEPORT ME... UNLESS I AGREE TO DO SOME JOB FOR YOU— IS THAT IT?
OH, BY NO MEANS...
...THIS MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE IS THE ONLY EVIDENCE WHICH COULD TAKE AWAY YOUR BRITISH NATIONALITY..
THERE! NOW I'VE COMMITTED A CIVIL OFFENCE, SHOCKED POOR FRASER, DESTROYED MY ONLY HOLD OVER YOU— AND ENJOYED A RIDICULOUSLY DRAMATIC GESTURE!
14
YOU'RE A CLEVER MAN, SIR GERALD... HOW DID YOU KNOW I'M A COMPULSIVE PAYER OF DEBTS?
MODESTY BLAISE
WHAT IS THIS JOB YOU WANT ME TO DO? YOU MENTIONED MURDER...
YES, MY CHAPS ATTACHED TO NATO WANT TO BREAK THE ORGANISATION CALLED 'LA MACHINE'... IT'S BEING USED TOO MUCH BY OUR POTENTIAL ENEMIES..
AH, LA MACHINE? THEY SPECIALISE IN BESPOKE MURDER. JUST PAY YOUR MONEY AND NAME YOUR VICTIM— SATISFACTION GUARANTEED!
YOU THINK I CAN HELP?
15
I THINK YOU MAY HAVE FOUND LUXURIOUS RETIREMENT VERY TEDIOUS... IF SO, COME AND SEE ME TOMORROW, AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT A JOB, MISS BLAISE...

MODESTY BLAISE
LA MACHINE IS A VERY SMART MURDER-GROUP... THEY'LL BE HARD TO REACH AND HARDER STILL TO BREAK!
IF I COME TO SEE YOU TOMORROW, MAY I BRING WILLIE GARVIN WITH ME?
AH, THE REMARKABLE WILLIE GARVIN, YOUR RIGHT-HAND MAN DURING THE YEARS THAT YOU CONTROLLED THE NETWORK—
I HAVE HIM HERE, SIR— AGED 30: BORN WHITECHAPEL: ENLISTED FOREIGN LEGION, 1950: DISCHARGED '54: JOINED MODESTY BLAISE—
DON'T BE SO EFFICIENT, FRASER... IT DEPRESSES ME!
16
MODESTY BLAISE
I KNOW WILLIE GARVIN'S RECORD... HE'S A FORMIDABLE MAN. I HARDLY HOPED TO GET BOTH OF YOU, MISS BLAISE—
YOU HAVEN'T YET— BUT IF I COME IN MYSELF, I'LL SPEAK TO WILLIE!
THANK YOU. I REALISE THIS IS A BIG DECISION FOR YOU TO MAKE—
I WON'T LET IT TROUBLE ME TOO MUCH, SIR GERALD— GOODNIGHT!
17
FIVE MINUTES LATER, MODESTY BLAISE IS SOUND ASLEEP...
MODESTY BLAISE
AT SEVEN A.M. MODESTY BLAISE WAKES...
... AND AN HOUR LATER SHE IS HEADING SOUTH, TOWARDS THE VILLAGE OF GRAIL...
I WONDER IF YOUR BIG AMBITION HAS TURNED AS SOUR ON YOU AS MINE, WILLIE GARVIN..?
18
MODESTY BLAISE
THIRTY MILES FROM LONDON STANDS A RIVERSIDE PUB, "THE TREADMILL" — PROPRIETOR, WM. GARVIN.
IS MR. GARVIN ABOUT?
THE GUV'NOR? HE'S NOT UP YET, MISS—
I'LL WAKE HIM— IT WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME!
19

MODESTY BLAISE
WHERE'S HIS BEDROOM? COME ON, I'M AN OLD FRIEND—
I DON'T RECKON HE'LL MIND TOO MUCH IF YOU'RE NOT / THROUGH THE ARCH, UPSTAIRS, SECOND DOOR ON THE LEFT...
HALF-A-MINUTE LATER, MODESTY VERY GENTLY TRIES THE HANDLE....
LOCKED...
GOOD— I'M GLAD YOU HAVEN'T GOT CARELESS SINCE YOU RETIRED, WILLIE...
20
MODESTY BLAISE
IN WILLIE GARVIN'S BEDROOM...
CLICK!
MODESTY BLAISE WITHDRAWS THE PICKLOCK...
GOOD FOR YOU, WILLIE. YOU STILL REACT FAST... BUT DON'T DO ANYTHING SUDDEN, IT'S ONLY ME!
MODESTY BLAISE
HALLO, WILLIE
'ALLO, PRINCESS... SEEMS A LONG TIME...
YOU ONLY CAME TO SEE ME ONCE
I KNOW..... BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM LIKE THE OLD TIMES NO MORE. THEM FRIENDS OF YOURS GOT ON MY WICK!
ON MINE, TOO...
IT HASN'T WORKED, WILLIE. I AIMED TO RETIRE YOUNG AND RICH... BUT NOW I'VE DONE IT, I FEEL LIKE A DAY-OLD STIFF!
22
MODESTY BLAISE
PLAY DARTS?
MY MANAGER RUNS THIS PUB BETTER'N I COULD... IT MAKES A BIT OF GRAVY, BUT I GOT PLENTY ANY 'OW! SO WHAT DO I DO?
I DAREN'T... BLIMEY, I'M BETTER WITH A KNIFE AT TWENTY FEET THAN THESE DOUBLE-TOP GEEZERS WITH THEIR DARTS AT NINE-AND-'ALF...
STILL?
AH, DO ME A FAVOUR—I KEEP ME 'AND IN, YOU KNOW! THEN THERE'S CARDS... CAN YOU SEE ME PLAYIN' CRIBBAGE, PRINCESS?
23


MODESTY BLAISE
COME ON, CUT ME FOR A QUID, PRINCESS— IT'LL BE THE RISKIEST THING I'VE DONE IN A YEAR!
GUESS I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD BEAT YOU WITH YOUR OWN DECK.

MODESTY'S FINGERTIPS LOCATE THE CARD THAT IS A HAIR'S-BREADTH BROADER THAN THE REST, AND ....
BETTER PAY ME, WILLIE... IT'S SIXTEEN TO ONE AGAINST YOU FINDING ANY OF THE STRAIGHT ACES NOW!

24
IF I CAN'T WIN DISHONEST, I'D RATHER LOSE!
I'LL WAIT DOWN BY THE RIVER WHILE YOU GET DRESSED, WILLIE... WE'LL WALK AND TALK A LITTLE...

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SO THIS BRASS-NECKED CLOAK AN' DAGGER LOT WANT US TO 'AVE A GO AT SMAGGIN' LA MACHINE?
THEY'VE ASKED ME, WILLIE...

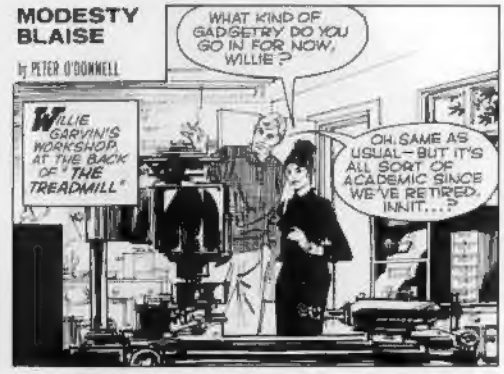
I'D 'ARDLY WATCH YOU GO OFF AN' TACKLE THAT BUNCH OF KILLERS ON YOUR OWN, PRINCESS. NOW WOULD I?
NOW I'M ASKING YOU... BUT DON'T FEEL BOUND, YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T WANT THAT

'SIDES, IT'LL BE LIVELY, BACK ON THE OLD CAPER—LET'S DO IT, EH?
BACK ON THE OLD CAPER...WE'RE FOOLS, OF COURSE... BUT I GUESS IT'S THE ONLY CAPER WE'RE FIT FOR, WILLIE LOVE
25

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
US... UNSUNG 'EROES OF THE SECRET SERVICE, IT'S A GIGGLE REALLY—BUT RIGHT NOW IT SEEMS LIKE THE BEST TURN-UP I'VE 'AD SINCE, WELL...

SINCE THAT NIGHT IN SHIRREF ... YOU POPPED UP WHILE OSMANI WAS TRYIN' TO MAKE ME TALK... AN' BROKE 'IS ROTTEN NECK FOR 'IM— GIVING AWAY FOUR STONE, TOO!

26
YOU TAUGHT ME WELL, WILLIE—DOES THAT STILL HURT SOMETIMES?
A BIT, IN COLD WEATHER — 'ERE, COME AND 'AVE A LOOK ROUND THE WORKSHOP, PRINCESS. I STILL MAKE A FEW LITTLE GADGETS


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WHAT KIND OF GADGETRY DO YOU GO IN FOR NOW, WILLIE?
WILLIE GARVIN'S WORKSHOP AT THE BACK OF "THE TREADMILL"
OH, SAME AS USUAL—BUT IT'S ALL SORT OF ACADEMIC SINCE WE'VE RETIRED, INNIT...?

THAT'S SOMETHING I WORKED OUT FOR RIGGING A ROULETTE WHEEL—ELECTRO-MAGNETIC, SEE?
SO SMALL! YOU'RE A GENIUS WITH THIS MINIATURE STUFF...

THIS? IT'S A PEN-GUN! FIRES A ·22 BULLET. I DESIGNED IT MESELF—CURTAINS AT SIX PACES IF YOU PLACE YOUR SHOT RIGHT
OH, VERY NEAT, WILLIE... I LIKE THAT
27

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
TEN O'CLOCK... I MUST GO WILLIE. WE'RE SEEING SIR GERALD AT FOUR, SO WILL YOU PICK ME UP AT MY FLAT?
I'VE GOT A WORK-OUT FIXED FOR THIS AFTERNOON, AT SAM'S GYM, OFF THE MILE END ROAD — COULD YOU PICK ME UP THERE?
THAT'S THE GYM YOU TOOK ME TO ONCE BEFORE, ISN'T IT? ALL RIGHT — SAY THREE-THIRTY, THEN
I MUST GET LIMBERED UP MYSELF IF WE'RE GOING BACK INTO THE BUSINESS, WILLIE...
28
SURE — WHENEVER YOU SAY, PRINCESS
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MY LIFE, YOU GOT A LOVELY GIRL THERE, MR. GARVIN!
DON'T TALK LIKE A NIT, MARKY. SHE'S NOT MY GIRL... SHE'S THE PRINCESS
EH? WAS IT ALL RIGHT TO LET HER IN THEN? SHE SAID SHE WAS AN OLD FRIEND OF YOURS, GUV!
29
SHE IS, MARKY... AND ANYTHING SHE WANTS, ANY TIME IS ALWAYS ALL RIGHT. SEE? IF SHE EVER WALKS IN AN' ASKS FOR MY 'EAD ON A PLATE — JUST GIVE IT TO 'ER
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AT SAM'S GYM, LONDON E.1
HERE, LADY! YOU CAN'T COME IN THIS PLACE...
OH, IT'S YOU, MISS BLAISE — SORRY! NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN! WILLIE GARVIN SAID YOU'D BE ALONG... SO I'VE WARNED THE LADS TO STAY DECENT LIKE
THANK YOU, SAM — IT'S A GREAT PRIVILEGE
I'M QUITE A BIT EARLY — IS WILLIE STILL WORKING OUT?
IN THE RING NOW, MISS, TRYING TO PIN YOUNG HAMMER BROOK
30
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
HALLO, WILLIE... SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND?
NO HECKLING, PLEASE! THEY'VE GOT RULES 'ERE, PRINCESS — IT'D CRAMP YOUR STYLE A BIT, TOO!
SAM... DON'T EVER LET HIM CON ONE OF YOUR MUSCLE-MEN INTO A NOTHING-BARRED SESSION — WHEN WILLIE'S SERIOUS HE FIGHTS THAI-STYLE...
AND HE'LL FLATTEN THE BEST OF THEM — WITH A COUPLE OF JUDO AND KARATE EXPERTS THROWN IN
31

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
YES, I'VE HEARD OF THIS THAI-FIGHTING, MISS— FISTS, FEET, KNEES AND ELBOWS, ISN'T IT?
THAT'S THE BASIS... BUT IT'S NOT A BLIND BRAWL, SAM
IT'S ALL HIGH-SPEED COMBINATION MOVES. THE PERFECTED ART OF VIOLENCE — WILLIE GOT EXPERT AT IT IN BANGKOK, WHEN HE QUIT THE LEGION
32
RIGHT, PRINCESS— I'LL JOIN YOU FOR A MUG OF SAM'S TORRIBLE COFFEE, AND THEN WE'LL BE OFF, EH?
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN SIR GERALD TARRANT'S OFFICE...
IT'S ALMOST FOUR— DO YOU THINK SHE'LL COME, SIR GERALD?
IF SHE DOESN'T, THEN MY PSYCHOLOGY IS SLIPPING
MODESTY BLAISE... I WONDER HOW ON EARTH SHE CAME BY A NAME LIKE 'MODESTY'?
I IMAGINE SHE HAD TO PROVIDE IT FOR HERSELF, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN HER LIFE...
AND I DON'T FIND IT UNSUITABLE, FRASER... SHE HAS A CURIOUSLY REMOTE QUALITY ABOUT HER
WELL, IT'S A BIG DAY, PRINCESS— WE'RE PROBABLY GOING TO GET OUR FIRST TASTE OF CIVIL SERVICE TEA...
33
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I HAVE OUR FILE ON THE FRENCH MURDER-GROUP READY FOR YOU, MISS BLAISE—
A RATHER SLIM ONE, I IMAGINE?
VERY SLIM, I'M AFRAID— BUT YOU MIGHT AS WELL READ IT BEFORE WE TALK
MR. GARVIN, I'M MORE THAN GLAD THAT YOU'RE READY TO WORK FOR MY ORGANISATION ON THIS JOB— AND I MEAN THAT
34
I WORK FOR MISS BLAISE, GUV... YOU GET ME AS PART OF THE PACKAGE
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THERE'S LITTLE DATA HERE, SIR GERALD ...AND I SEE THREE MEN HAVE BEEN LOST SO FAR, TRYING TO GET IT
WHAT ABOUT M.O.?
MODUS OPERANDI ONLY SAYS THAT "LA MACHINE" HAS AREA-MANAGERS FOR DIFFERENT DIVISIONS OF EUROPE... THEY GET ORDERS FROM THE TOP, AND HIRE HATCHET-MEN TO DO THE SPECIFIED KILLING
EVERYTHING'S COMMERCIAL THESE DAYS...
WE'RE SURE LA MACHINE IS CENTRED IN FRANCE... DO YOU THINK YOU CAN GET INSIDE IT, MISS BLAISE? TO THE BRAINS AT THE TOP?
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MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTICULAR PLAN FOR US, SIR GERALD?
AH, NOW YOU'RE TESTING ME, MY DEAR! PLEASE CREDIT ME WITH A MEASURE OF SAGACITY...
I KNOW THAT THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL TACKLE THIS JOB IS YOUR OWN WAY— I SIMPLY OFFER YOU ANY HELP MY ORGANISATION CAN GIVE
36
YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT 'IM, PRINCESS— I MUST SAY IT'S A PLEASURE TO WORK FOR A GAFFER WHO'S GOT ALL 'IS MARBLES
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
HAVE YOU SOME KIND OF PLAN IN MIND?
THIS FILE SAYS LA MACHINE WORKS MAINLY BY APPROACHING LIKELY CLIENTS... THEY HAVE THE KIND OF INFORMATION THAT HELPS TO SPOT POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS
SO I'LL SET MYSELF UP AS A GOOD PROSPECTIVE CLIENT... WITH WILLIE GARVIN AS THE MAN I WANT MURDERED
AHH... YES! YES, INDEED! YOU'LL NEED TIME TO ESTABLISH A PLAUSIBLE BACKGROUND OF ENMITY, OF COURSE
THREE WEEKS, WE RECKON
37
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SO YOU'LL INVITE AN APPROACH FROM LA MACHINE TO MURDER MR. GARVIN FOR YOU... NOW WHAT ABOUT DETAILS?
YOU CAN LEAVE ALL THAT TO US, SIR GERALD
WITH EVERY CONFIDENCE, MY DEAR... I'LL JUST GIVE YOU THE METHOD FOR CONTACTING MY HEAD FELLOW IN FRANCE. IF YOU NEED TO
WE'LL BE TOLD TO TAKE ORDERS FROM YOU AND FROM MR. GARVIN FOR THIS EXERCISE
WOULD YOU MIND CALLING ME WILLIE, SIR G? I MEAN, WE'RE MORE OR LESS MATES NOW, AREN'T WE?
38
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANT TO DRAW FROM THE ARMOURY?
THANK YOU, NO— WE SUPPLY OUR OWN TOOLS, AND WILLIE DOESN'T LIKE GUNS ANYWAY
PROBABLY BECAUSE HE'S THE WORLD'S WORST SHOT!
AH, THEY'RE ALL RIGHT FOR WESTERNS — BUT BUSINESS-WISE THEY'RE MOSTLY A DRAG
WILLIE SAYS A GUN MAKES A MAN TOO CONFIDENT— AND I MUST SAY HE'S PROVED IT ONCE OR TWICE WITH GREAT SUCCESS
I'M GLAD YOU AVOID OVER-CONFIDENCE— IT WOULDN'T DO, NOT AGAINST LA MACHINE...
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MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT MODESTY BLAISE, SIR— AFRAID SHE'LL END UP LIKE THE OTHERS?
I CAN'T AFFORD TO WORRY ABOUT LOSING AN AGENT, FRASER!
BUT I SEEM TO BE ALLOWING MYSELF THE LUXURY THIS TIME. CURIOUS THAT I SHOULD LIKE THE GIRL SO MUCH.
WHY SHOULD SOMEONE SO SELF-SUFFICIENT MAKE ME FEEL SAD? OH DAMMIT! BRING THE D-SECTION FILE AND LET ME GET ON WITH SOME WORK!
40
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AT MODESTY'S PENT-HOUSE...
PUTTING THE WORD ROUND THAT WE'RE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS IS SOMETHING WE'VE GOT TO FIGURE PRETTY CLOSE, PRINCESS
WE CAN BLOCK OUT THE SCHEME OVER DINNER BUT WE'LL BE ALL NIGHT ON THE DETAILS
RING DOWN FOR SOMETHING COLD TO EAT PLEASE, WILLIE
AND LATER I'LL MAKE A GALLON OF BLACK COFFEE TO KEEP US GOING
BLACK COFFEE AND AN ALL-NIGHT FIGURIN'-SESSION JUST LIKE THE GOOD OLD DAYS
41
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AN HOUR BEFORE DAWN
WELL THAT'S THE YOLE BUILD UP WORKED OUT RIGHT UP TO OUR BIG SCENE IN LE GANT ROUGE. AND AFTER THAT, WE PLAY IT BY EAR
NEED THESE NOTES ANY MORE?
I DON'T AND NEITHER DO YOU, UNLESS YOU'RE SLIPPING WILLIE. LOVE— GET RID OF THEM NOW
AREN'T SECRET AGENTS SUPPOSED TO SWALLOW IMPORTANT PAPERS? I'LL TOSS YOU FOR WHO DOES IT, PRINCESS.
42
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN EUROPE THE UNDERWORLD'S GRAPEVINE SPREADS A WHISPER THAT MODESTY BLAISE IS MAKING A COME BACK. BUT ALONE!
BUT SHE AND HER WILLIE GARVIN WOULD NEVER QUARREL. THEY ARE FRIENDS. VOYONS— NOT LOVERS!
TRUE ENOUGH! BUT PEOPLE CHANGE MA BELLE. DO YOU KNOW THAT RENE LE LOUP SAW GARVIN IN MARSEILLES LAST WEEK— VERY VERY DRUNK!
IF RETIREMENT HAS DONE THAT TO HIM IT COULD HAVE CHANGED MODESTY ALSO
SUCH A THING IS HARD TO BELIEVE.
43

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE RUMOUR SPREADS AND HARDENS
YOU HAVE TALKED TO MODESTY BLAISE - AND NOW YOU ADVISE ME THAT WE KEEP OUT OF THE NEW NETWORK? BUT WE COMBINED VERY PROFITABLY WITH HER BEFORE, JEAL
I SENSED A DIFFERENCE IN HER THE COOLNESS IS NO LONGER REAL AND HER NERVES ARE SHOWING THIS COME BACK S AL OBSERS ON - SHE WANTS IT YET FEARS T
AND SO, AFTER THREE WEEKS IN A PARIS APARTMENT
THE STORY LINES WELL SET, PRINCESS - WE CAN STAGE THE BIG PUNCH-UP TOMORROW N GHT
OKAY W LLIE, AND REMEMBER T MUSTN T JUST LOOK REAL, T'S GOT TO BE REAL
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
LE SAINT ROUGE - A NIGHT-CLUB WHERE THE ELITE OF THE PARIS UNDERWORLD GATHER
LOOK ROUND SLOWLY N A MOMENT IT IS MODESTY BLAISE
THEY SAY SHE WILL NOT TALK TO GARVIN AND HE GROWS ANGRY!
GARVIN S FORMIDABLE I WOULD NOT CROSS HIM BUT HE WILL BE A FOOL TO CROSS THAT ONE!
MON DIEU - HE IS HERE!
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WELL..WELL I'VE BIN CHASING ROUND TRYIN TO AVE A TALK WITH YOU FOR LONG ENOUGH PRINCESS
YOU VE MADE A DAMN NUISANCE OF YOURSELF!
WHY NOT? YOU TOOK US OUT OF THE BUSINESS AND F YOU RE MOVING BACK THEN I WANT IN KE BEFORE
I WON'T NEED AN OFFICE BOY - I'M DOING TH S ALONE!
T LOOKS AS F -
TAIS-TOI! I AM TRYING TO CATCH A WORD OR TWO WHY THE DEV L MUST GARVIN TALK IN THAT COCKNEY ENGLISH WHEN HE SPEAKS FRENCH LIKE A PARISIEN?
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
LOOK I'LL GIVE YOU THE SCORE, MISS MODESTY RUDDY BLAISE EITHER YOU TAKE ME IN WITH YOU OR I'LL STOP YOU DEAD!
THE UNDERWORLD CLIENTELE OF LE SAINT ROUGE SEE MODESTY'S TEMPER SNAP!
DON'T THREATEN ME YOU SCUT!
WELL NOW T LOOKS LIKE I'LL 'AVE TO SHOW YOU I'M NOT JUST TALKING...

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
GET IT OFF, YOU HAS-BEEN GUTTERSNIPE — YOU WON'T BULLDOZE YOUR WAY INTO A DEAL WITH ME!
LAST I KNOW WHAT GUTTER I CAME OUT OF — MAYBE IT WAS CLASSIER THAN YOURS.
BUT I'D BETTER SHOW YOU I'M SERIOUS — AN' NO HAS-BEEN!

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE QUARREL EXPLODES INTO SUDDEN, VICIOUS ACTION
F.N SH— FOR ONE OF THEM!
THE BUTT OF WILLIE GARVIN'S HAND THUDS ACCURATELY UNDER MODESTY'S JAW
NO — THE KNOCKOUT ONLY HE WILL LIVE TO REGRET THAT, I THINK

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
UNCONSCIOUS, MODESTY BLAISE IS SENT SPRAWLING ACROSS THE TABLE
AH! I ALWAYS DID 'AVE THE EDGE ON YOU!
M'SIEU GARVIN! PLEASE! WE DO NOT WANT THE FLICS HERE!
IN EASY FRENCH...
DON'T DISTURB YOURSELF, JULES — A LADY HAS FAINTED FROM THE HEAT PERHAPS YOUR CLIENTELE WILL SURELY CONFIRM THA-

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MAM'SELLE MAM'SELLE BLAISE
AH GENTLY MAM'SELLE. GARVIN HAS GONE NOW AND...
LEAVE ME ALONE I-I DON'T NEED HELP, DAMN YOU
SLOWLY MODESTY BLAISE GETS TO HER FEET
GIVE ME A NAPK'N. MY HAND'S CUT. THEN CALL A CAB FOR ME

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

FIX MY HAND UP FIRST, THEN USE YOUR MAGIC TOUCH ON MY NECK. YOU DAMN NEAR TOOK MY HEAD OFF, WILLIE LOVE
LIKE YOU ORDERED, PRINCESS - NOTHING BUT THE BEST FOR YOU!

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

GOOD AS NEW IN TEN MINUTES. I WONDER HOW LONG IT'LL TAKE LA MACHINE TO RECKON YOU A LIKELY CLIENT FOR WANTING ME RUBBED OUT...?
WE'VE FAKED A SOLID BACKGROUND-- AND SOMEONE WHO SAW THE FIGHT MUST BE ON THEIR PAY ROLL

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

MAM'SELLE BLAISE? I SPEAK FOR LA MACHINE— YOU MUST KNOW OUR LINE OF BUSINESS WE THINK YOU MAY HAVE A PROBLEM THAT YOU WANT ELIMINATED

I CAN QUOTE YOU THIRTY THOUSAND STERLING - PLUS A SUPPLEMENT FOR ANY REFINEMENTS YOU MAY REQUIRE
I WANT THE JOB DONE WITHIN THREE DAYS - NO TRIMMINGS

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

A VOICE SPEAKS FOR LA MACHINE THE CONTINENTAL MURDER-GROUP
... PAYMENT WILL BE CALLED FOR WITHIN THIRTY DAYS FOLLOWING EXECUTION OF THE ORDER—YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THE PENALTY FOR NON-PAYMENT IS... EXTREME?

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SURE, PRINCESS — I'M SHACKED UP WITH LITTLE PERNOD M.M. DOWN IN MONTMARTRE, AND GOING TO SEED FAST ON BOOZE
YOU'VE GOT EVERYTHING SET THE WAY WE ARRANGED?
NOW I'M OFF TO SHUT MESELF UP FOR A THREE DAY BENDER — SO WHOEVER'S BRIEFED TO KNOCK ME OFF WILL 'AVE TO COME AN' GET ME
DON'T LET THAT POOR LITTLE SOUSE GET HURT, WILLIE
SHE WON'T... I'M ALWAYS CONSIDERATE WITH ME GIRLFRIENDS, PRINCESS
56

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MONTMARTRE. THREE A.M., TWO DAYS AFTER MODESTY BLAISE HAS COMMISSIONED WILLIE GARVIN'S DEATH.
THE LIGHT'S STILL ON
WHEN PERNOD M.M. WAKES AT NIGHT SHE LIKES TO FIND THE BOTTLE EASILY... AND SO DOES GARVIN. NOW, IT SEEMS
MORE SIMPLE FOR US THEN. LET'S SET IT DONE WITH
A BUZZER SOUNDS SOFTLY UNDER WILLIE GARVIN'S PILLOW TWICE.
TWO OF 'EM ON THE STAIRS NOW
57

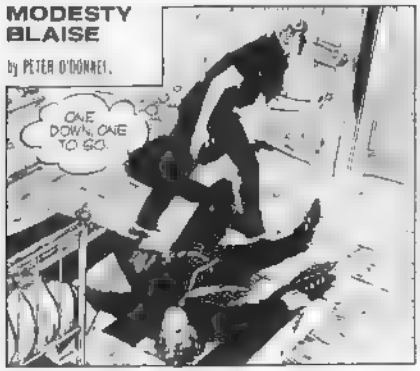
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WILLIE — ARE YOU GETTING A DRINK? ONE FOR ME TOO, PLEASE
LATER MA PETITE — YOU HAVE TO SLEEP SOUNDLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE NOW
UNDER THE BED NICE AND SAFE
uhh!
THE KILLERS MOVE SILENTLY INTO THE OUTER ROOM
58

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE BEDROOM DOOR OPENS SILENTLY ON WILLIE'S DRUNKEN SNORES
GARVIN'S THERE BUT NOT PERNOD M.M. FOR THE MOMENT — STAY BY THE DOOR IN CASE SHE COMES
USING A C.H.V. THEN
IN WILLIE'S HAND IS HIDDEN A SWITCH CONNECTED TO THE LIGHT...
59

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
Click
WILLIE PRESSES THE SWITCH

SUDDEN DARKNESS BLANKETS THE KILLER'S VISION FOR A SECOND.

AND WILLIE'S ELBOW STRIKES SQUARELY AT THE THROAT PREVENTING ANY WHISPER OF A CRY
60


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
ONE DOWN, ONE TO GO.

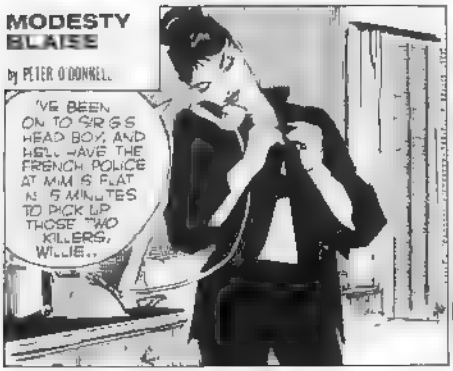
THE SECOND MAN IS WATCHING THE STAIRS
C'EST FINI?

FOR YOU COPAIN, YES
ELBOW PUNCH

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE PHONE WAKES MODESTY BLAISE
AH WILLIE? THEY CAME FOR YOU THEN?
HALF HOUR AGO. I'VE USED THE OLD PENTOTHAL ON ONE OF 'EM, AND HE'S SUNG, PRINCESS

GOT THE NAME OF THE AREA-MANAGER WHO GAVE THESE TWO THEIR ORDERS. A NICE RESPECTABLE LAWYER IN RUE PERRION.

WHAT NUMBER, WILLIE? I'LL WANT TO SEE INSIDE HIS SAFE AND THERE'S ENOUGH TIME BEFORE DAYBREAK FOR US TO CASE THE PLACE TONIGHT


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I'VE BEEN ON TO SIR G'S HEAD BOY, AND HE'LL HAVE THE FRENCH POLICE AT MIMI'S FLAT IN 5 MINUTES TO PICK UP THOSE TWO KILLERS, WILLIE..

YOU HAND THEM OVER, THEN MEET ME IN RUE PERRION, RIGHT?
WILL DO, PRINCESS

IN THE BEDROOM, PERNOD MIMI WAKES
WILLEE...
63

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WHAT HAPPENS, WILLEE? I WAKE UP UNDER THE BED, MY HEAD ACHES MOST PAINFULLY, AND OH! WHO ARE THESE MEN?
THEY COME FROM THE TEMPERANCE SOCIETY, MA BELLE... TAKE THESE TABLETS AND GO BACK TO SLEEP. I WILL GET RID OF THEM
OOOOH... YES, WILLEE
TEMPERANCE? AH, COCHONS!
64

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN LONDON, SIR GERALD TARRANT READS A MESSAGE FROM BRETT, HIS MAN IN PARIS
MODESTY BLAISE AND WILLIE GARVIN HAVE LOCATED THE AREA-MANAGER OF LA MACHINE, FRASER, AND THEY'RE HAVING A GO AT HIS SAFE — TONIGHT
LA MACHINE WILL STILL BE LOOKING FOR GARVIN - URGENTLY, I WONDER WHERE HE'S HIDING NOW?
IN THE LAST PLACE THEY'D LOOK FOR HIM, MAGNE — WITH THE WOMAN WHO COMMISSIONED THEM TO KILL HIM
65

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
COFFEE, WILLIE
ERE IT'S NOON. YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE LET ME SLEEP ON
I THOUGHT YOU'D EARNED A LITTLE REST
YOU MEAN NAILING THEM TWO HOODS? AH, THAT DIDN'T AMOUNT TO MORE THAN A BIT OF COMIC RELIEF, HONEST
I MEANT AFTER A WEEK WITH PERNOD MM!
YOU GAVE THE ORDERS, PRINCESS!. NOW WHAT ABOUT THIS CAPER TONIGHT, EH?
66

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IT SHOULD BE AN EASY ONE... THROUGH THE LITTLE COURTYARD AT THE BACK, AND IN BY THAT FIRST-FLOOR WINDOW TO ROLVET'S OFFICE
IT'S HIGH TIME I BLEW A SAFE AGAIN - BUT YOU DON'T RECKON I'D BE BETTER TO HOBBLE THE BLOKE MYSELF, PRINCESS?
NO. IF HE VANISHES, LA MACHINE WILL GET ITS GUARD UP FAST, AND...
BZZ!
VISITORS - STAY OUT OF SIGHT, WILLIE LOVE
67

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
FRANK BRETT, OF NATO INTELLIGENCE, SIR SERALD TARRANT'S MAN IN PARIS
GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU, MODESTY – MY FRENCH OPPO, NIMEAU, PUT A MAN IN TO SEE THIS CROOK SOLICITOR ON SOME PHONEY LEGAL QUEST ON
THE SAFE THERE IS A MONNIER – NEW MODEL WITH THE SINGLE COMBINATION LOCK
NICE JOBS THEY ARE! I'LL NEED THREE HOURS TO OPEN IT, PRINCESS
TWENTY SECONDS, WILLIE. NIMEAU HAS BEEN ON TO THE SAFE-MAKERS AND MADE THEM COUGH UP THE COMBINATION
BLIMEY! I WOULDN'T LIKE IT KNOWN 'VE BEEN FEATHER-BEDDED!
68
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WHAT YOU CARRYIN' PRINCESS?
THE MAB BREVETE
WHY NOT THE COLT THIRTY TWO? I ATE AUTOMATICS THEY JAM TOO EASY
IT'S A GOOD ENOUGH DETERRENT, WILLIE. WE'RE NOT JOINING A WAGON TRAIN TONIGHT
69
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THE OFFICE OF J. M. ROUVET, SOLICITOR— AND AREA-MANAGER FOR THE MURDER GROUP KNOWN AS LA MACHINE
WATCH OUT FOR THE WIRE WHERE I'VE BRIDGED THE ALARM CIRCUIT, PRINCESS
IF WE DON'T FIND ANY PAPERS HERE TO GIVE US A LEAD— THEN WHAT? TRY ROUVET'S FLAT?
IF WE FIND NOTHING HERE, THEN I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING WRITTEN TO BE FOUND, WILLIE. WE'LL HAVE TO DRAW THEIR FIRE AND SPOT THE FLASHES
70
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THAT'S IT, THEN – ALL STRAIGHT STUFF, AN' NOTHING THAT POINTS TO WHERE WE FIND THE TOP BOYS OF LA MACHINE
PUT IT ALL BACK IN THE SAFE, WILLIE.
AND PUT THIS WITH IT, WHERE IT CAN'T BE MISSED
I HAVE A PROPOSITION, MODESTY BLAISE
AH, NOT THE LIVE BAIT CAPER AGAIN, PRINCESS! THEY'LL SWING THE WHOLE ORGANISATION BEHIND ONE JOB – CROAKIN' MODESTY BLAISE!
THEY'LL WANT ME ALIVE FIRST... TO FIND HOW MUCH I KNOW AND WHETHER ANYONE ELSE KNOWS

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I DON'T LIKE IT... YOU'VE STUCK YOUR NECK OUT A MILE!
DON'T BE DAMN SILLY, WILLIE LOVE... I DIDN'T FUSS WHEN YOU WERE WAITING FOR THE CHOPPER
STOP ROUND THE CORNER FROM FRANK BRETT'S FLAT – YOU'RE GOING TO LIE LOW THERE WILLIE, AND I MEAN LIE LOW!
SO WHO STANDS BY TO TAIL YOU WHEN YOU'RE SNATCHED?
NOBODY... WE'VE GOT TO BE SMARTER THAN THAT
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MORNING AND THE AREA-MANAGER OF LA MACHINE FINDS THE MESSAGE FROM MODESTY IN HIS LOCKED SAFE
M'SIEU?
DELAY MY ELEVEN O'CLOCK APPOINTMENT— I HAVE TO GO OUT FOR A FEW MINUTES
BRETT, OF NATO INTELLIGENCE, GETS A CALL FROM HIS FRENCH OPPOSITE NUMBER
THAT WAS NIMEAU —HE'S PUT A TAP ON THE MAN'S PHONE, WILLIE
ROUVET WON'T BE FOOL ENOUGH TO TALK FROM HIS OFFICE... YOU'VE GOT A CLOCK WANTS MENDING 'ERE, FRANK
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I STILL SAY THAT WHEN LA MACHINE GRAB MODESTY FROM THAT HOTEL SHE'S MOVED TO, WE OUGHT TO TAIL THEM
YOUR FRENCH MATES 'AVE GOT A STATIC NETWORK OF POLICE LAID OUT TO REPORT ALL ALONG ANY ROUTE THEY MIGHT TAKE 'ER
NETS HAVE HOLES, WILLIE
I KNOW... BUT THE FRENCH POLICE ARE RED 'OT ON THIS KIND OF CAPER... AND ANYWAY, WE GOT TO PLAY IT THE WAY MODESTY SAID
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
FOR TWO DAYS MODESTY DOES NOT LEAVE THE HOTEL AND AT LAST
EXCUSE ME, MAM'SELLE THIS NOTE WILL INTRODUCE ME... I AM TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH SOME FRIENDS OF MINE YOU WISH TO SEE
AH YES...
"TWO GUNS WITHIN THREE METRES OF YOU— WALK WITH ME TO THE CAR OUTSIDE OR THEY WILL SHOOT TO KILL"
YOU HAVE GONE TO NEEDLESS TROUBLE, M'SIEU
PERHAPS— BUT MY FRIENDS WISHED IT SO— SHALL WE GO?

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
LA MACHINE'S WIRELINGS TAKE MODESTY BLAISE FROM THE HOTEL
A HUNDRED METRES AWAY
IT BEGINS. RAOUL SHE'S GETTING INTO A GREY CITROEN WITH THREE MEN—
GET THE NUMBER OF
FIVE MINUTES LATER...
NIMEAU ON THE BLOWER. THEY'VE GOT HER WHERE JEFF'LL BE ROUND FOR US IN THE CONTROL CAR ANY MINUTE SO YOU CAN QUIT DISMANTLING MY CHATTELS AT LAST
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AFTER SEVERAL HOURS IN THE CAR, MODESTY SPEAKS FOR THE FIRST TIME
HOW MUCH LONGER?
SHUT YOUR MOUTH DOLL - WE'RE NOT PAID TO TALK
REPORTING FROM REFERENCE E 2 - THE CAR TURNS RIGHT TOWARDS PERRINS
TEN MILES BEHIND...
UNDERSTOOD
YOUR NICE STRAIGHT ROADS WERE MADE FOR THIS NIMEAU
TS TOO EASY... I DON'T LIKE IT
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MY EARS HAVE STARTED PRICKLING. THAT'S A SURE SIGN SOMETHING'S GOING TO GO SOUR
EARS? THIS S THE FAMOUS ENGLISH HUMOUR, PERHAPS?
I'M NOT BEING FUNNY, NIMEAU. I'M JUST BEING SCARED
SCARED FOR MODESTY BLAISE? YOU HAVEN'T WORRIED SO FAR WILLIE - WHY NOW?
BECAUSE MY EARS HAVE STARTED PRICKLING, YOU GREAT STEAMING NIT!
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
TOWARDS DAWN, THE CITROEN SWINGS INTO A SMALL COURTYARD IN THE LITTLE VILLAGE OF TARLIER
WELL? WHAT NOW?
WARNED YOU ABOUT ASKING QUESTIONS, DOLL.
LOUIS— CHECK AGAIN FOR A HIDDEN WEAPON, THEN PUT A ROPE ON HER
79

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

OVERLOOKING THE VILLAGE OF TARLIER STANDS THE MONASTERY KNOWN AS LA RETRAITE

NO PROBLEMS? NOBODY TRIED TO TAIL THE CAR FROM PARIS?

NO, THEY WERE POSITIVE ON THAT... AND SHE HAS SEEN NO TROUBLE SO FAR

AH GOOD MORNING! SO YOU ARE MODESTY BLAISE, WHO HAS A PROPOSITION FOR US?

80

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

MID-MORNING IN THE POLICE STATION AT TARLIER

NO WORD OF THE CAR SINCE DAWN — SEEMS THAT GARVINS EARLY WARNING EARS WERE RIGHT — SENSING TROUBLE MON VIEUX.

THE CITROEN CAME INTO TARLIER BUT DIDN'T COME OUT — SO WHERE THE HELL IS IT?

NOT ANYWHERE IN THE VILLAGE MSIEU. WE HAVE LOOKED DISCREETLY — BUT THOROUGHLY!

81

SUPPOSE THEY HANDED MODESTY OVER HERE SOMEWHERE — THE CITROEN HEADED BACK ON THE SAME ROAD THAT WE'D JUST COME IN BY — NO ONE WOULD BE LOOKING FOR THEM THERE ANY LONGER...

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

SHE WOULD PLAY IT THIS WAY, WILLIE, AND NOW GOD HELP HER LA MACHINE HAS GOT HER — YOU WERE RIGHT TO BE SCARED

THAT'S OVER, MATEY.

82

I ONLY GET EDGY WHEN THINGS ARE GOING WRONG, NOT ONCE THEY'RE GONE, AND THEY ALWAYS DO SOMEWHERE SHE KNOWS THAT WELL ENOUGH

MODESTY'S BEEN UNDER THE CHOPPER BEFORE, AND COME OUT ALL RIGHT — THEY'VE GOT A TIGER BY THE TAIL THERE

LET'S GO AND TALK TO THE LOCAL BAKER

BAKER?

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL

THE BAKER'S UP AND ABOUT EARLIER THAN ANYONE — HE COULD HAVE SEEN SOMETHING

I'LL TAKE A CHANCE... I'LL TALK TO HIM

JAGRONNE ROULANGER

STONE IN MY SHOE

WILLIE RISES, AND WALKS ON PAST THE BAKERY

83

HEEL OF MODESTY'S SHOE — IT WAS JAMMED IN THE WHEEL OF THAT VAN IN MEAL. LET'S CHECK ON THIS BAKER BEFORE WE START TALKING TO HIM

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THAT IS WHERE LAGRONNE DELIVERS BREAD BEFORE DAWN EACH DAY. LA RETRAITE, A PLACE OF REST FOR AILING AND ELDERLY MONKS
ELDERLY MONKS! YOU'RE WASTING TIME HERE - WE SHOULD BE SQUEEZING LAGRONNE - HE'S THE LINK MAN
IF SO I DON'T WANT HIM SCARED NOT YET ANYWAY
SO ON ABOUT LA RETRAITE MON VIEUX - WOULD A TOURIST BE PERMITTED TO VISIT IT?
AH NO IT IS MOST PRIVATE
84
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
FATHER MARASIN HAS SEEN FOUR YEARS ASO TO TAKE OVER LA RETRAITE HE CAME FROM ALGERIA...
THE CALL SIR YOU OF A MONASTERY DESTROYED BURNS THE F
SATISFIED NOW? LA MACHINE CAN'T BE BASHED THERE!
85
YEAH IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. AND THAT'S JUST WHAT MAKES IT FAVOURITE IN MY BOOK, FRANKIE BOY
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN THE HIGH WALLED GROUNDS OF LA RETRAITE, FRAIL AND ELDERLY MONKS MOVE SLOWLY TO THE CHAPEL FOR PRAYER...
AND IN THE QUARTERS OF FATHER MARASIN
GET ME A QUICK DRINK CASTEL I'M ON IN FIVE MINUTES
AND KEEP OUT OF THE BLASE WOMAN'S CELL YOU HEAR?
HEAR MON COLONEL
86
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WE'LL LEAVE HER TO SWEAT TILL TONIGHT WITHOUT GOING NEAR HER - THEN IT WON'T TAKE LONG TO BREAK HER DOWN
NO ONE CAN WAIT TWELVE HOURS TO GET HURT WITHOUT STARTING TO CRACK A LITTLE AND SHE KNOWS SHE'S GOING TO GET HURT ALL RIGHT
BUT IN A WINDOWLESS CELL REMOTE FROM THE MAIN LIVING QUARTERS OF THE MONASTERY MODESTY BLAISE LIES WITHDRAWN FROM ALL FEARS, ASLEEP
87

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN THE COVER OF A GROVE OF TREES.
IF YOU ARE RIGHT WILLIE, WE WOULD HAVE TO TURN LA RETRAITE UPSIDE DOWN TO FIND MODESTY BLAISE... AND I DARE NOT RISK THAT!
I KNOW.
YOU BOTH WORK FOR GOVERNMENTS... BUT I DON'T. I GUESS THAT'S WHY SIR GERALD PUT ME AN' THE PRINCESS ON THIS - IN CASE THE RULES NEEDED BREAKING
SO?
SO SHOVE OFF MATEY WHAT YOU DON'T SEE YOU CAN'T GET BLAMED FOR
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I'LL GO IN AFTER DARK .. LEAVE ME SOME FAGS, FRANK
THEY COULD HAVE TAKEN MODESTY APART BY THEN — IF SHE'S THERE
SHE'S COOL SHE'LL STALL 'EM FOR A WHILE IF IT COMES TO T
DON'T TELL ME SHE'S NEVER SCARED, WILLIE - THAT'S FOR DAFT FOOLS WITH NO IMAGINATION!
89
SHE'S GOT A FEW TRICKS FRANK SHE CAN SWITCH OFF THE IMAGINATION AND GO BLANK
WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO HER AS A KID. THAT WAS ONE TRICK SHE NEEDED TO LEARN ..
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
TOWARDS DUSK.
GOODNIGHT FATHER
SLEEP WELL OLD FRIEND
ANOTHER HOUR AND YOU CAN BRING THE WOMAN UP HERE. CASTELLO OUR HOLY DOG WILL BE WELL OUT OF THE WAY BY THEN
I'VE CHECKED ON HER THROUGH THE PEEP HOLE THREE TIMES AND SHE'S NOT SWEATING MON COLONEL... SHE'S ASLEEP!
90
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I WANT THIS WOMAN'S NERVES RATTLED BEFORE I SEE HER.
THE GLOCKENSPIEL? A BUCKET PLACED OVER THE HEAD AND VIGOROUSLY PRUMMED? THIS A GREAT DE— TRANQUILISER.
NOISY THOUGH - JUST MIGHT REACH A FEW PIOUS EARS
BUT BROTHER LEON WILL SOON START RINGING THE BELL FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES... SO WHY NOT PUT HER IN THE BELL TOWER, HMM?
91

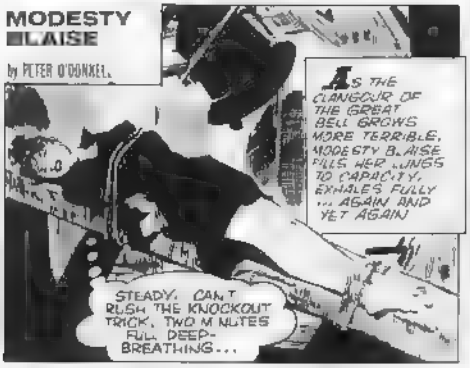
MODESTY BLAISE

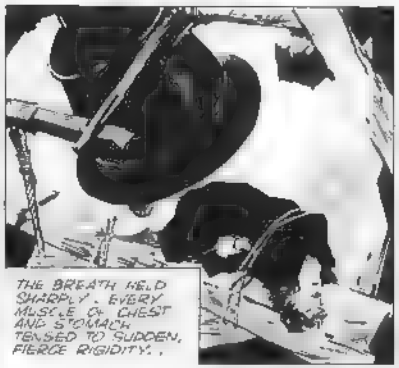
by PETER O'DONNELL

FIVE MINUTES LATER IN THE BELL TOWER
ENJOY THE MUSIC MY LITTLE CABBAGE IT'S JUST STARTING AND REMEMBER THAT THIS IS ONLY THE OVERTURE TO A LONG HARD NIGHT

MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL


AS THE CLANGOUR OF THE GREAT BELL GROWS MORE TERRIBLE, MODESTY BLAISE FILLS HER LUNGS TO CAPACITY, EXHALES FULLY ... AGAIN AND YET AGAIN
STEADY. CAN'T RUSH THE KNOCKOUT TRICK. TWO MINUTES FULL DEEP-BREATHING...



MODESTY BLAISE

by PETER O'DONNELL

WILLIE GARVIN KEEPS WATCH ON LA RETRAITE
THE BELL'S STOPPED. RECKON THEY'LL SOON BE TUCKED UP FOR THE NIGHT MOST OF 'EM ANYWAY
'ALLO...! THAT'S LAGRONNE THE BAKER'S VAN — HE'S OPENING UP TO DRIVE IN THE SIDE-WAY

94
WILLIE MATE. YOU'RE POINTING THE RIGHT WAY BUT DON'T HANG AROUND TOO LONG THAT VAN COULD BE FOR TAKING THE PRINCESS OUT, WHEN THEY'VE FINISHED WITH HER .

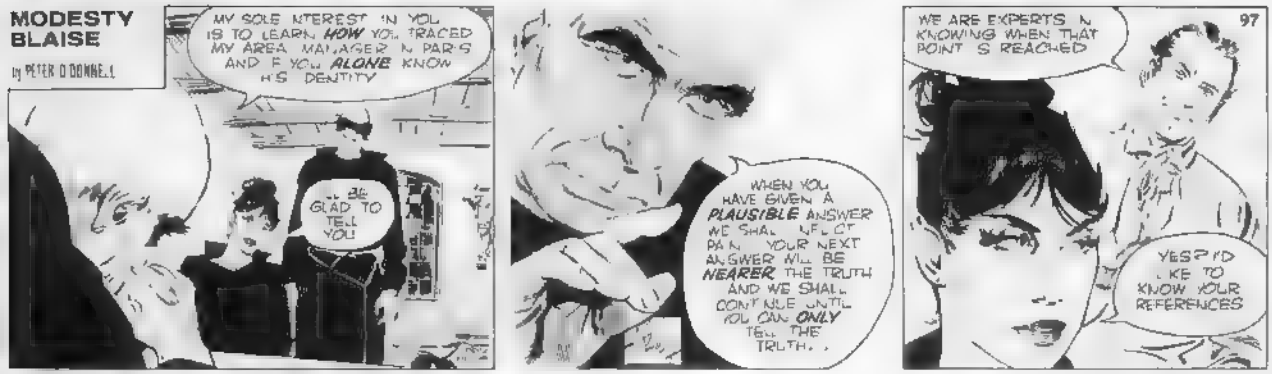
MODESTY BLAISE

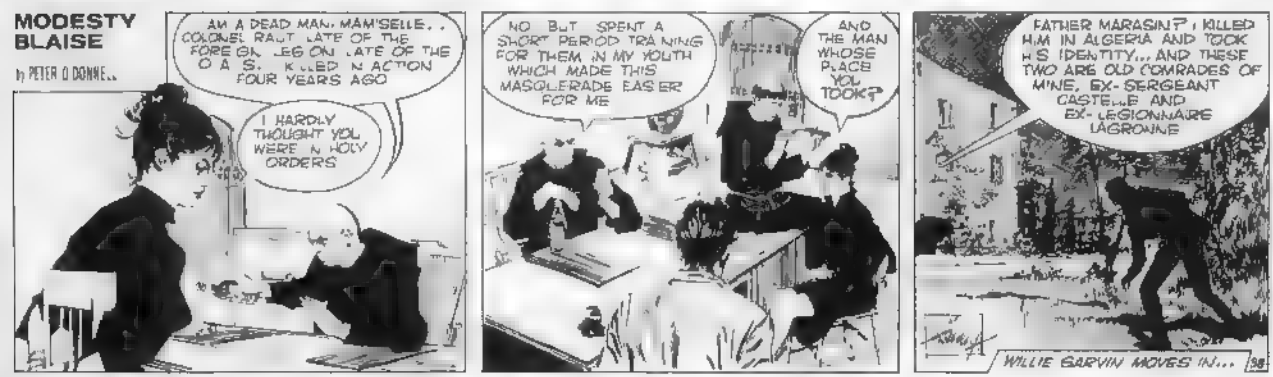
by PETER O'DONNELL

CASTELLE SHOULD HAVE THE WOMAN READY FOR QUESTIONING NOW, YOU'RE JUST IN TIME, LAGRONNE
BON! I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO HAVE ALL THE FUN. HE'S A GREEDY SWINE

95
IF YOU'RE THE BOSS OF LA MACHINE, LET ME TELL YOU YOUR ORGANISATION STINKS, MY FRIEND — YOU COULD CERTAINLY DO WITH SOME FRESH BLOOD IN IT

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
YOUR MURDER-MACHINE IS SLIPPING — I COMMISSIONED YOU TO KILL WILLIE GARVIN, AND YOU SENT TWO DUMB THUGS WHO COULDN'T COPE WITH HIM ASLEEP AND DRUNK!
I'M NOT YET SATISFIED ON THAT. BUT IF OUR AREA-MANAGER DID USE INADEQUATE LABOUR THEN LAGRONNE HERE, MY LIAISON OFFICER, WILL PASS ON A SEVERE REPRIMAND
AND NOW, MAM'SELLE, THERE ARE ONE OR TWO POINTS YOU MUST HELP US CLEAR UP BEFORE WE KILL YOU.
96


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MY SOLE INTEREST IN YOU IS TO LEARN HOW YOU TRACED MY AREA MANAGER IN PARIS AND IF YOU ALONE KNOW HIS IDENTITY
BE GLAD TO TELL YOU!
WHEN YOU HAVE GIVEN A PLAUSIBLE ANSWER WE SHALL NOT PAUSE. YOUR NEXT ANSWER WILL BE NEARER THE TRUTH AND WE SHALL CONTINUE UNTIL YOU CAN ONLY TELL THE TRUTH.
WE ARE EXPERTS IN KNOWING WHEN THAT POINT IS REACHED
97
YES? I'D LIKE TO KNOW YOUR REFERENCES


MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AM A DEAD MAN, MAM'SELLE. COLONEL RAUL LATE OF THE FOREIGN LEGION LATE OF THE O.A.S. KILLED IN ACTION FOUR YEARS AGO
I HARDLY THOUGHT YOU WERE IN HOLY ORDERS
NO. BUT I SPENT A SHORT PERIOD TRAINING FOR THEM IN MY YOUTH WHICH MADE THIS MASQUERADE EASIER FOR ME
AND THE MAN WHOSE PLACE YOU TOOK?
FATHER MARASIN? I KILLED HIM IN ALGERIA AND TOOK HIS IDENTITY... AND THESE TWO ARE OLD COMRADES OF MINE, EX-SERGEANT CASTELLE AND EX-LEGIONNAIRE LAGRONNE
WILLIE GARVIN MOVES IN...
98

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN FOUR YEARS NOBODY HAS SUSPECTED THAT YOU'RE NOT THE REAL FATHER MARASIN?
WHY SHOULD THEY? I RUN LA RETRAITE TO THE ENTIRE SATISFACTION OF MY CLERICAL SUPERIORS..
AND BEFORE I KILLED MARASIN I KNEW HIS FACE WAS VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN OUTSIDE THAT MONASTERY IN ALGERIA — OF WHICH HE WAS THE SOLE SURVIVOR
LET'S GET ON WITH IT, MON COLONEL — I HAVEN'T MADE ANYONE TALK SINCE THE O.A.S....
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MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THIS CHARADE WON'T SCARE ME INTO JOINING YOU AT KNOCK-DOWN TERMS, COLONEL — YOU NEED ME! I WOULDN'T HAVE FUMBLED THE JOB OF KILLING GARVIN!
YOU GOT KNOCKED COLD AND WON A GASHED HAND LAST TIME YOU TANGLED WITH HIM!
DROP IT, CASTELLE! SHE REALLY THINKS WE'RE NEGOTIATING — JUST SHOW HER WE'RE NOT
100
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
NOW THAT WAS JUST AN APERITIF, EH, LASRONNE?
CAN'T WAIT LONGER ...HAVE TO PLAY MY ONE SHOT — IF I CAN MAKE IT...
AND OUTSIDE...
I CAN ONLY KILL ONE, BUT I CAN KILL HIM FOR SURE — SO WHO'S GOING TO MOVE FIRST? JUST A TWITCH'LL BE ENOUGH
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MOVE AWAY FROM HER... DEAD SLOW
THE ONE WITH THE CIGAR CARRIES A GUN, WILLIE — I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE OTHERS
RIGHT.. MOVE CLEAR, BUT DON'T UNSIGHT ME, PRINCESS
NOBODY'S GOING TO TRY ANYTHING, GARVIN, WE KNOW YOUR FORM WITH A BLADE... STEP DOWN AND LET'S TALK
102
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
YOU'RE RIGHT, GARVIN, YOU CAN KILL ANY ONE OF US WHO MOVES... SO WHY DON'T WE ALL WORK TOGETHER ON THIS —
NOW!
MODESTY LUNGES TO BLOCK THE HURTLING BOTTLE — AND WILLIE'S FIRST KNIFE KILLS CASTELLE IN MID-DRAW
103

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AS LASGRAINE DIES UNDER WILLIE'S SECOND KNIFE...
AAAGH!
STAND STILL GARVIN!
THAT'S RIGHT... VERY STILL!
104

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I COULD MISS YOU, BUT NOT HER, GARVIN. SO DON'T GET RASH! BESIDES, I'M GOING TO NEED NEW STAFF NOW, SO—
PRINCESS... CAN YOU MAKE IT?
MODESTY'S FINGERS CURL ROUND THE WRIST OF HER SWATHED HAND, PRESSING HARD... AND A ·22 BULLET SLAMS OUT AT POINT-BLANK RANGE FROM THE PEN-GUN HIDDEN BENEATH THE BANDAGES...
105

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
ANY BULLET-BURN WHEN YOU FIRED THE PEN-GUN?
NO... I DON'T THINK SO... IT'S AS WELL WE HAD THIS GIZMO LAID ON, WILLIE
I'LL CALL OUR INTELLIGENCE MATES, THEN 'AVE A LOOK AT YOU, PRINCESS... YOU'VE BEEN UP THE SHARP END GOOD AN' PROPER ON THIS CAPER
106
THE LOCAL GENDARMERIE, WHERE FRANK BRETT AND NIMEAU HAVE BEEN WAITING...
YES... YES... ALL RIGHT, WILLIE, WE'LL BE THERE IN TEN MINUTES— AND YOU CAN SAY "I-TOLD-YOU-SO"

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WHY THE WELL DID YOU HAVE TO KILL THEM BOTH? YOU COULD HAVE DROPPED ONE ALIVE, SO WE COULD HAVE TALKED
I DIDN'T LIKE THAT CHEAP CIGAR THEY WERE USING ON YOU, PRINCESS... SIT DOWN AND LET'S GET A DRESSING ON
SORRY, WILLIE...
FOR WHAT? I GET EDGY WHEN THE PARTY'S STARTING, YOU GET EDGY WHEN IT'S FINISHED— SO YOU SNAP ALL YOU WANT, SEE? MY LIFE, YOU'VE EARNED IT...!
107

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
SO LAGRONNE, THE BAKER, WAS IN IT! WHO ELSE, MON VIEUX?
OUTSIDE THE GENDARMERIE...
NOT SURE—GARVIN ONLY GAVE ME THE BONES OF IT ON THE PHONE... BUT THERE ARE THREE DEAD
SEEMS THEY'D JUST STARTED DAMAGING MODESTY WHEN HE ARRIVED... AND OUR WILLIE WOULDN'T LIKE THAT ONE BIT
THREE! NOT EASY WITHOUT A GUN...
MODESTY HERSELF TOOK THE BIG BOY... THAT INJURED HAND OF HERS WAS A FAKE, NIMEAU! SHE HAD A PEN-GUN FIXED UNDER THE BANDAGES...
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
THOSE FILES, FRANK—FULL DETAILS OF LA MACHINE'S ORGANISATION, CONTACTS, CLIENTS—YOU CAN'T MISS
THIS MESS WILL HAVE TO BE CLEARED UP BEFORE THE MONKS ARE ABOUT TOMORROW... AND YOU'D BETTER RING THE CHURCH AUTHORITIES ABOUT SENDING SOMEONE TO TAKE CHARGE HERE—
LEAVE IT ALL TO US, MODESTY... YOU TAKE THE CAR AND GET SOME SLEEP— THERE'S A LITTLE HOTEL BEHIND THE GENDARMERIE
SLIP THIS ON, PRINCESS... I THINK YOU'RE FEELING A BIT CHILLY
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
WELL...! IT WORKED OUT VERY NICE, REALLY...
WILLIE, I— I'M SORRY... GIVE ME A MOMENT TO— TO STEADY UP...
AH, WHY THE HELL DO I... ALWAYS S-SNIVEL ONCE A JOB'S OVER...?
ONLY THE TOUGH JOBS, PRINCESS, AN' YOU GOT TO UNWIND SOME WAY... I LIKE IT MESELF— IT'S, YOU KNOW, NICE AN' WOMANLY
THAT'S RIGHT, YOU 'AVE A GOOD CRY... NO ONE'LL EVER KNOW BUT MRS. GARVIN'S LITTLE WILLIE, SO WHAT'S IT MATTER?
MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
AFTER FIVE MINUTES, MODESTY SITS UP AND DRIES HER TEARS
AHH... THANKS FOR THE SHOULDER TO UNWIND ON... I FEEL A NEW WOMAN NOW
RIGHT, THEN 'OP IN THE CAR AND WE'LL GET YOU TO THE 'OTEL FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S KIP, EH?
WILLIE, LOVE... HOW DO YOU UNWIND?
WELL, I'M TOO BIG TO 'AVE A CRY...
SO I RELY ON ME LITTLE ADDRESS-BOOK, PRINCESS
YES... THERE'S A LOT TO BE SAID FOR THOSE GOOD OLD-FASHIONED REMEDIES

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
IN THE PENT HOUSE OF MODESTY BLAISE, A WEEK AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MURDER-GROUP CALLED LA MACHINE
WELL... DO YOU ALWAYS WELCOME YOUR OPERATIVES HOME WITH FLOWERS SIR GERALD?
ONLY WHEN THEY'RE FEMALE—AND WORK ON AN HONORARY BASIS, WITHOUT PAYMENT
HOW ARE YOU, MODESTY? I'VE HAD BRETT'S REPORT—YOU TOOK A LOT OF PUNISHMENT
NO LASTING DAMAGE... IN FACT I FEEL FINE! IT'S A MISTAKE TO QUIT WORKING WHEN YOU'VE KNOWN NOTHING ELSE ALL YOUR LIFE
112

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
I'D LIKE TO MAKE A PAYMENT TO WILLIE GARVIN—BUT WILL HE ACCEPT?
NO, WILLIE'S LOADED... AND ANYWAY HE'LL TELL YOU HE ONLY WORKS FOR ME, SIR GERALD
THAT'S NOT MY VIEW, YOU UNDERSTAND? IT'S HIS
YOURS FAITHFULLY WILLIE GARVIN, H'MM? WELL, AT LEAST I MUST THANK THE SCOUNDREL...
WHERE CAN I FIND HIM?
I THINK HE'S GONE AWAY FOR A LITTLE HOLIDAY—JUST TO UNWIND, YOU KNOW
113

MODESTY BLAISE
by PETER O'DONNELL
MAY I COME TO YOU AGAIN—IF THERE'S A JOB THAT CALLS FOR YOUR RATHER SPECIAL TALENTS?
I HOPE YOU WILL
I NEED TO BUY YOUR WARES FROM TIME TO TIME, SIR GERALD... I'M HOOKED, AND I KNOW IT NOW
MY DREAM OF RETIRING WAS JUST A PIPE-DREAM...
YOU KNEW THAT, WHEN YOU FIRST CAME TO ME, DIDN'T YOU?
OH YES... AND I MAKE USE OF IT BECAUSE I MUST... BUT I ALLOW MYSELF THE RATHER SAD SATISFACTION OF DISLIKING MYSELF FOR IT...
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